

Emily Schmall
Summer 2004
Talk Radio News Service



For six weeks, I was part of the knee-length skirt, button-down shirt professional class of Washington, D.C. Boasted as the best internship in the world—or something equally compelling—Talk Radio News Service sucked me in, and before I knew it, I was racing through Capitol Hill to cover Senate and House hearings, media events and not-for-profit institutional brunches.

Although she has a show on Fox, Ellen Ratner, the leading figure of Talk Radio News, is an outspoken liberal, a woman talk radio has both condemned and glorified for her audacity in bracing issues of sexuality on-air. But behind the pomp and the mystery of this notorious voice is a small operation run out of her Georgetown home, where interns produce work that is sold and delivered to radio stations across the country.

From 8 until 8, we scoured the newspapers, came up with story ideas, ran to the Hill, to the White House, and to embassies around the city; followed stories, wrote stories, aired stories, booked guests, slaved away for talk radio hosts, and tried to keep up with independent investigation all for the sake of an ‘in’. We were never paid, but were never degraded. We wrote with a flame on our tails, knowing that our work was listened to and depended upon. Each week, one of us was nominated ‘czar’, and assumed the responsibilities of a producer for three syndicated shows in New England, and as editor of a crew of interns dispersed all around the capitol.

I attended both the Democratic National Convention and the Republican National Convention, interviewing everyone from Jesse Jackson to Pat Buchanan, followed the congressional deliberations into summer recess over the 9/11 Commission report, and wrote a ten-minute feature on police strategy and protest politics.

All of my pieces are archived online at collegemedianews.com, and talkradionews.com. Additionally, I filed convention reports to www.npr.org/nextgen.

